

Service Experience And Customer Loyalty To Telecommunication Networks: Evidence From Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The main aim of this study was to investigate the influence of service experience on customer loyalty to telecommunication networks in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Fair tariff plans and quality of network service were considered indicators of service experience and measured against customer loyalty. The study was anchored on the expectancy confirmatory theory. The quantitative research design approach was employed. The population for the study was voice subscribers from the four telecommunication service providers in the state. The sample size of 400 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. Respondents were selected using the simple random sampling technique, and data were collected with the use of a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. The collected data were then analysed using a simple linear regression at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that both fair tariff plans and quality of network service had a significant influence on customer loyalty. It was therefore concluded that a fair tariff plan and quality network service were significant predictors of customer loyalty to telecommunication providers. Based on the findings, it was further recommended, among others, that telecommunication service providers should ensure that their prices charged on their tariff plans are fair with transparent pricing.

Keywords: Service experience, Quality, Tariff plan, Telecommunication, Customer loyalty.

Introduction

Since the debut of the Global System of Mobile Communication (GSM) in 2001, there has been an unbelievable exponential growth in the number of subscribers, reaching over a hundred million. Evidently, the aggregate number of subscribers has risen exponentially over the previous decade (Nkordeh *et al.*, 2017). In spite of the extraordinary growth in the subsector, the quality of services provided by telecommunications operators has remained unimpressive, owing to poor interconnectivity between the different networks. The problem of constant call drops, message and call failures and overloaded billing has not been effectively addressed, despite numerous complaints from the consuming public (Izuchukwu, 2020). These complaints have built up consumer expectations and perceptions that are capable of determining their choice and impression about the different providers of the telecommunication network in the country. Thus, boosting current customer value is a major issue for telecommunication service providers. Typical research models in service marketing have treated service value as a one-dimensional construct, while others have defined antecedents of service value that may lead to customer satisfaction, delight, and loyalty to include fairness in the tariff plan, perceived service quality, and others (Alzoubi *et al.*, 2020).

When selling service items such as telecommunications, customers' perceptions of price/tariff fairness are critical (Herrmann *et al.*, 2017). The typical consumer is price conscious. To them, deciding whether a particular service satisfies their expectations entails weighing the cost of the service against the value gained (Omoera, 2017). It is therefore critical to comprehend how purchasers construct price and tariff fairness judgements and how their reasoning influences their evaluation of certain services and, as a result, their decision to patronise a specific service provider depending on the quality of service supplied (Omoera, 2017).

Customers also consider the quality of network service while selecting it. Giday (2017) characterises service quality as the discrepancy between customer expectations of service and customer perceptions of the actual service. Customers view services in terms of quality, how pleased they are with their overall set of experiences, and how the service brand is perceived, which might influence their loyalty or decision to switch (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2014).

The goal of any company is to create an emotional bond between customers and the brand and attract customer loyalty (Aiswarya and Krishnan, 2019). Loyalty is considered a profound and constant commitment to buy a service in the future, which results in repurchases of a certain brand, especially in the face of situational factors and marketing activities capable of causing behaviour changes or even switching (Saueressig *et al.*, 2021). Customer loyalty may mean achieving competitive advantages and improved performance for telecommunications companies, and it is a primary focus for marketers (Visentini and Fenner, 2017). Thus, this study is motivated by the consideration of how fairness in a tariff plan and the perceived quality of network service affect customer loyalty, particularly in the telecommunication industry.

Statement of the Problem

One of the problems confronting the telecommunication business in Nigeria is how to satisfy customers whose complaints often emanate from service failure and disparity between perceived service quality and the price paid for the services. This challenge may arise as a result of high price, poor service delivery, and inability to correct errors, occasioned by failed services. Other challenges facing network providers may include a decline in sales and an increase in switching behaviours due to customer dissatisfaction during the service delivery process.

Previous literature on telecommunication services in Nigeria shows that studies have been specific to their respective areas, and there is very limited research from Akwa Ibom State that has adopted the variables highlighted in this study. This study aims to determine whether the fairness of the tariff plan and the quality of telecommunication network services impact customer loyalty in Akwa Ibom State. This study is conducted to determine whether the fairness of the tariff plan and the quality of telecommunication network services impact customer loyalty in Akwa Ibom State.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to investigate the impact of service experience on customer loyalty to telecommunication networks in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. examine the influence of fair tariff plans on Customer Loyalty to telecommunication networks in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. ascertain the relationship between quality of network service and customer loyalty to telecommunication networks in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses will guide the conduct of the study:

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between fair tariff plans and customer loyalty to Telecommunication Networks in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

H_{02} : the quality of network services does not significantly influence customer loyalty to Telecommunication Networks in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Framework

The conceptualised model for this study, which is presented in Figure 1, aligns with the proposed objectives and hypotheses that guide it.

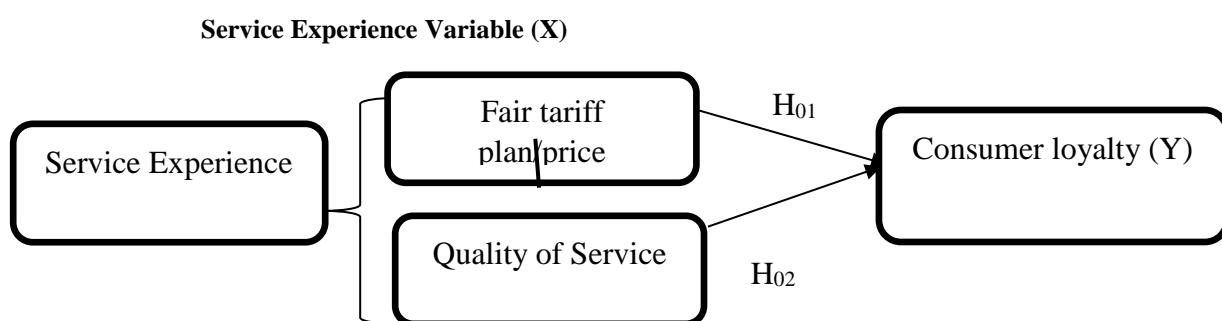


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of service Experience and customer loyalty to Telecommunication Service.

Source: The Researcher's Conceptualisation (2025).

An Overview of Service Experience

The concept of service experience has been described as the core of the service offering and service design (Zomerdijk and Voss, 2019). The term "customer experience" was first conceptualised in marketing literature by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and became popular in marketing literature by Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Carbone and Haeckel (1994). Both authors interchangeably interpreted the concepts of customer experience through the lens of service experience. Early authors assert that service experiences are the outcomes of interactions between organisations, related systems/processes, service employees and customers (Bitner *et al.* 2019). Schmitt *et al.* (2018) assert that every service exchange leads to an experience by the customer, regardless of its nature and form. This expansive perspective considers customer experience holistic in nature, incorporating the customer's cognitive, emotional, sensory, social, and spiritual responses to all interactions with a firm (Bolton *et al.* 2020; Keler, 2019).

Fairness in tariff plan (Price) of the Telecommunication Services Providers

Telecommunication brands make efforts to make profits through product pricing; consumers search for fairly priced service subscriptions that deliver maximum value (Ogonu and Ihunwo, 2022). Customers' reactions to prices may come in the form of contentment, loyalty, and price acceptance (Fiqqih, 2023). Customers perceive the tariff plans of telecommunication service providers as reasonable, and their service quality contributes to customer satisfaction (Fiqqih, 2023). Sellers are therefore careful when setting a price for a product because a group of buyers whose needs are to be satisfied tend to hold different perceptions about the prices of products and services. This view is usually expressed as fairness or unfairness, using both the price charged and the rationale for offering the price (Xia *et al.* 2014). The customer usually judges the fairness of a tariff plan on the basis of price. In evaluating the overall fairness of tariff plans offered by telecommunication networks, the customer considers both the monetary and non-monetary costs of acquiring the service (Ikechi and Tamuno, 2023). Perceived monetary price is usually assessed by a direct measure of price paid for the service, while non-monetary price can be assessed by measures of time and effort associated with a service (Ikechi and Tamuno, 2023). Oh (2020) described fairness in tariff as a judgement of whether an outcome and the process to reach an outcome are reasonable, acceptable, or just (reliability) (Diller, 2018). Srikanjanarak *et al.* (2019) suggest that the dimensions of price fairness may include flexibility, acceptability, superiority, reasonability, affordability and objectivity.

Quality of network Service

Quality can be defined as customers' notion of the value of services in a post-purchase scenario, which provides information to the firm on whether their services are valuable (Strenitzerová and Gana, 2018). Izogo (2015) defined quality of service as a process where firms match the expected service and actual service to each other so that consumer satisfaction is achieved. Parasuraman *et al.* (1985, 1988) conducted the most prominent study. Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) identified ten dimensions of service quality that they subsequently reduced to five, which include reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. Each of these attributes is measured as a gap between expectations and performance or disconfirmation of expectations (Izogo, 2017). Although Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) claimed that the five dimensions of service quality identified in their research are generic, subsequent studies suggest that they vary across contexts and countries as well (Izogo and Ogbu, 2015). Haddad *et al.* (2012) suggest that to understand consumers' views of the quality level of services, service managers should consider perceptions of service inputs and the service process as well as perceptions of service outcomes. They assert that the predominantly satisfying determinants of quality of service are attentiveness, responsiveness, care, friendliness, integrity, reliability, responsiveness, availability and functionality.

Customer loyalty to Telecommunication Network Providers

Customer loyalty is the behaviour of a customer who buys the same product from the same supplier. It is vital for creating and maintaining a competitive edge in the service industry (Ogonu and Ihunwo, 2022; Etuk *et al.*, 2022; Onyia *et al.*, 2025). Loyal customers remain faithful to a firm and support its profitable growth. According to Rubio *et al.* (2019), loyalty is one of the main assets of a brand. It means repeat purchasing of the brand based on strong internal disposition. In other words, repeated purchases result in a preference for that brand. Hur *et al.* (2010) describe loyalty as the continuous repurchase of (or ongoing supporting behaviour towards) a preferred product or service, regardless of other options and marketing efforts to induce switching to competitors. Shahin *et al.* (2011) assert that loyalty is either a repeat purchase behaviour driven by favourable attitudes or a consistent purchase behaviour resulting from psychological decision-making and evaluation. The different definitions of loyalty lend credence to the submission that loyalty possesses substantial value to both customers and the firm (Ode, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

This study bases its theoretical framework on the expectancy confirmatory theory. Propounded by Richard L. Oliver, 1977. The theory first gained prominence in a pair of papers he wrote between 1977 and 1980. Although the theory initially appeared in the psychology and marketing literature, it has since been adopted in several other scientific fields, such as consumer research, sales management, and information systems, among others. The expectation confirmation theory (ECT) is a cognitive theory that focuses on experience, expectations, perceived performance, and the disconfirmation of beliefs to explain post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction behaviours. Post-purchase behaviour (customer loyalty) will happen if the service performs better than expected (positive disconfirmation). A consumer is likely to be disappointed and act negatively if a product doesn't live up to expectations (negative disconfirmation, such as switching brands). As presented in Figure 2, there are four main constructs that make up the expectation confirmation theory: expectations, perceived performance, disconfirmation of beliefs, and satisfaction.



Figure 2: Expectancy Confirmatory Theory

Source: Oliver, R. L. (1977). Effect of expectation and disconfirmation on postexposure product evaluations: An alternative interpretation.

i. Expectations: Expectations are the features or characteristics of an object, such as a service or technology that a person anticipates or predicts will be associated with it. Expectations are thought to have a direct influence on both perceptions of performance and belief disconfirmation.

ii. Perceived Performance: Perceived performance refers to a person's perceptions of a service or technology's real performance. According to expectation confirmation theory, pre-purchase or pre-adoption expectations immediately influence performance perceptions, which in turn directly influence belief disconfirmation and post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction.

iii. Disconfirmation of beliefs: Disconfirmation of beliefs describes a person's assessments of a service or technology. These evaluations or choices are made based on the person's initial expectations. Positive disconfirmation occurs when a service or technology performs better than the user's initial expectations. This aspect is thought to boost post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction. Negative disconfirmation is said to lower post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction when a service or technology falls short of the user's initial expectations.

iv. Satisfaction: The degree to which a person is pleased or content with a service or technology following direct experience with it is referred to as satisfaction. According to expectation confirmation theory, satisfaction is directly influenced by belief disconfirmation and perceived performance and is indirectly influenced by both expectations and perceived performance.

Researchers in the present study adopt the theory to explain the likely outcomes of customers' perceptions of telecommunication services. If the value of the service corresponds to the price paid and the quality of network services offered is satisfactory, customers are likely to perceive the brand positively. Additionally, if the telecommunication company's service recovery mechanism effectively addresses any service failures, customers are more inclined to demonstrate loyalty towards the provider after adoption. Moreover, if the provider fails to meet customers' expected service quality after charging a price, customers expect a better service recovery approach from the provider; otherwise, they may become dissatisfied, leading to a lack of loyalty and a negative perception of the brand.

Empirical Review

Kaptanoglu and Yukselen (2020) carried out a study in Istanbul on the relationship between perceived value and customer satisfaction and the role of difference in product involvement levels. The authors utilised the survey design approach. Data was collected with the use of a questionnaire from 604 respondents who were made up of graduate students of Istanbul Beykent University and analysed using the regression analysis. Findings revealed that the value perceived by consumers is important in their satisfaction.

Fiqqih (2023) conducted a study in Indonesia examining how perceived price fairness, product quality, and service quality affect customer loyalty among Shopee consumers, with customer satisfaction serving as a mediating factor. Data was collected with a survey instrument from Shopee consumers. Data collected were tested using the partial least squares method. Findings revealed that price fairness has an effect on customer loyalty, while product quality and service quality have no effect on customer loyalty.

Torrão and Teixeira (2023) undertook a study with the main aim of examining the elements that affect customer loyalty and satisfaction with Portuguese telecommunications. The survey research design approach was utilised in the study. Data were collected from 357 respondents with a structured questionnaire adapted from previous studies in the field. The suggested hypotheses were tested using multiple statistical techniques, culminating with path analysis through structural equation modelling. The research results demonstrate that consumer loyalty is highly impacted by satisfaction. On the other hand, service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction, whereas trust and perceived value have a positive yet insignificant impact on this construct.

Aiswarya and Krishnan (2020) carried out an investigation in India with the main purpose of developing a scale to measure brands and analyse the role of brand perception and its impact on the purchase decision of apparel brands. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire from 384 respondents, who were selected using the convenient sampling technique. Data collected were analysed using the exploratory factor and the structural equation modelling. Regression analysis was further conducted with purchase intention as the dependent variable and brand perception and purchase decision being independent. Findings revealed that brand perception and purchase decision significantly predicted participants' purchase intention.

Guliyev (2023) carried out a study in Azerbaijan with the main objective of examining the impact of brand perception and image on the buying behaviour of consumers living in Azerbaijan. The quantitative research approach, particularly the survey research design approach, was adopted in the study, and the author used a questionnaire survey to gather data from a sample size of 300 respondents. Data collected were analysed using the multiple regression analysis and the Pearson's Product Moment correlation analysis. Findings showed that brand perception and brand image have a significant impact on consumer purchasing behaviour.

Ikechi and Tamuno (2023) undertook an investigation in Nigeria with the main aim of evaluating the relationship between customer-perceived value adoption and marketing performance of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. The descriptive survey research design was applied in the study. Data were collected with the use of a survey questionnaire from a sample size of 253 respondents selected using the simple random sampling technique. The Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. The result showed that the quality of products used and services rendered in the luxury hotel in Port Harcourt influenced the guest satisfaction and equally increased the market share efficiency.

Fatmi and Malviya (2023) undertook research in India with the main aim of determining the effect of perceived price fairness on customer satisfaction, which apparently has an effect on customer loyalty. The study was desk research, and data were collected from multiple sources of evidence, including various websites, articles and journals, to provide evidence on the significant impact of price perception on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Findings revealed that customers are not automatically loyal to any one firm; rather, firms need to give their customers a reason to consolidate their buying with them and then stay with them. Firms need to create value for customers to become and remain loyal.

Egena (2019) examined the impact of service quality on customer loyalty in the Nigerian mobile telecom industry. The survey research design approach was utilised in the study, and data were collected with the use of a questionnaire from 532 subscribers of mobile telecom service providers to collect information on user perceptions of service quality and customer satisfaction, which are antecedents of customer loyalty and retention. The respondents were purposively selected across the six geopolitical zones in the country to give a fair representation of the entire customer streams in Nigeria. The formulated hypotheses were tested using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between the variables. The result of data analysis indicates a positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and between service quality and customer loyalty.

Methodology

This study employed the quantitative research design approach to achieve its set research objectives. The quantitative approach allowed the researcher to gather primary data from the desired respondents, using responses from copies of the survey questionnaire to test the hypotheses stated. Akwa Ibom State was adopted as the study area. There are four major telecommunication service providers in the state: MTN, Airtel, Globacom and 9Mobile. Evidence from the Bureau of Statistics shows that as of 2024, the total number of GSM voice subscribers in Akwa Ibom State was 3,581,745. The population for this study consisted of voice subscribers from the four telecommunications service providers in the state. This sample constitutes a known population of the study. The statistics of voice subscribers make up the target population for the study, as most internet subscribers are primarily voice subscribers. Table 3.1 presents a breakdown of statistics that show the total number of telecommunication voice subscribers.

Table 1.: Telecommunication Companies operating in Akwa Ibom State

S/No.	Telecommunication Providers in Akwa Ibom State	Voice Subscribers
1		1,175,009
2		803,090
3		1,370,984
4		232,035
5	Others	627
	Total	3,581,745

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2024).

Sample Size Determination

Since the population of the study is known, the sample size for the study will be determined using the Taro Yamane formula at 95% degree of confidence and at 0.05 acceptable tolerance level of error. The formula states and is applied as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

N = Population:3,581,745

n = Sample size

e = Error term: 0.05

The sample size is determined by applying the formula above as follows

n = $3,581,745 / (1 + 3,581,745 (0.05)^2)$

n = $3,581,745 / 1 + 3,581,745 (0.0025)$

n = $3,581,745 / 1 + 8954.3625$

n = $3,581,745 / 8955.3625 = 399.96$ approximately 400

Hence, 400 respondents were arrived at as the sample size for this study; n= 400 respondents

The sampling procedure that was adopted for this study to select 400 respondents was the simple random sampling technique, which is a probability sampling method. This method provided potential participants from the state capital, Uyo, with an equal chance of being selected, allowing them to share their opinions on the subject, which would enable the findings to be generalised. Data for this study was gathered from a structured questionnaire measure on a 5-point Likert scale, which ranged from 5 for strongly agree to 1 for strongly disagree, indicating the lowest negative response to the question on the instrument. Furthermore, the questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A consists of demographic data of the respondent, aimed at identifying the characteristics of the respondents. Section B, on the other hand, comprises questions that are specifically tailored to the main variables employed in the study.

The researcher administered and collected copies of the questionnaire from respondents within a time frame of three weeks at the different locations designated within the study area. The questionnaire instrument was in printed form, since the targets are voice subscribers, to accommodate those without smartphones. The instrument was assessed for content and construct validity by the researcher's supervisor, who assessed the relevance of each item in relation to the objective of the study. Observations and corrections were adopted when producing the final copies of the questionnaire. To test the internal consistency of the five items in the survey instrument, a Cronbach's alpha reliability test was undertaken. The resulting coefficient, which was used to determine the reliability of the items, exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.6, and all items were adopted for the study.

Table 2: Summary of Test Pretest Reliability Measure of Variables (See Appendix)

S/No	Indicators	Number of Items	cronbach Reliability Coefficients
1	Price of tariff plans	3	0.788
2	Service quality	3	0.668
3	Customer Loyalty	3	0.811
	Total	9	0.756

Source: Field Survey Data (2025).

For the purpose of identifying the characteristics of the target respondents' demographic data, it was collected and analysed using a frequency distribution and simple percentage tables. The researchers used simple linear regression analysis to test the formulated hypotheses (H01 and H02), which aimed to establish the level of relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable. The decision rule accepts if the p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule rejects the hypothesis if the P-value falls below the 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation

Test of Hypotheses

All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25.0). Results of the simple linear regression analysis are shown on the Tables.

Hypothesis One (H₀₁)

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between fairness of tariff plan and Customer loyalty to Telecommunication Network providers in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.793 ^a	.628	.627	1.44221

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tariff plan

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1256.170	1	1256.170	603.938	.000 ^b
	Residual	742.548	357	2.080		
	Total	1998.719	358			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

b. Predictors: (Constant), Tariff plan

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant) 1.582	.406		3.898	.000
	Tariff plan .842	.034	.793	24.575	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

The table shows that the fairness of the tariff plan ($X_1 = TP$) accounts for approximately 62% of the variation in customer loyalty to telecommunication network services, as indicated by the R^2 value of 0.628. This result implies that the fairness of the tariff plan, as an independent variable and an indicator of service experience, explains 62% of the changes in customer loyalty to telecommunication providers, while the remaining 38% of the variation could be attributed to other factors not captured in the model.

To assess the degree of change between the independent variable (fairness of the tariff plan) and the dependent variable (customer loyalty), the analysis revealed a statistically significant unstandardized coefficient ($\beta_{x1} = 0.842$) with a p-value of 0.000. This indicates a significant positive relationship between tariff plan fairness and customer loyalty to telecommunication services. In practical terms, this means that for every one-unit improvement in tariff fairness, there is a corresponding 0.842-unit increase in customer loyalty, all other factors being held constant.

Based on the estimated regression coefficients, the simple linear regression model is expressed as:

$$CL=1.582+0.842TPCL = 1.582 + 0.842TPCL=1.582+0.842TP$$

where:

CL = Customer Loyalty

TP = Tariff Plan Fairness

Since the significant p-value (0.000) is less than the 0.05 level of significance, and following the study's decision rule, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that fairness of tariff plans has a significant and positive influence on customer loyalty to telecommunication networks in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Two (H_02)

H_02 : Quality of network service does not significantly influence customer loyalty to Telecommunication Networks in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.721 ^a	.520	.519	1.63897

a. Predictors: (Constant), Quality network

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1039.739	1	1039.739	387.065	.000 ^b
	Residual	958.979	357	2.686		

Total	1998.719	358			
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a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Quality network

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant) 4.430	.364	.721	12.177	.000
	Quality network .613	.031			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

Source: SPSS Output (2025).

From the Model Summary Table, the R value of 0.721 indicates a strong positive correlation between network service quality and customer loyalty. The R² value of 0.520 shows that the quality of network service accounts for 52% of the variation in customer loyalty to telecommunication network services. This means that the remaining 48% of the variation in customer loyalty is explained by other factors not included in the model. The Adjusted R² value of 0.519 confirms the model's stability and suitability for prediction.

The ANOVA table presents an F-value of 387.065 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that the regression model is statistically significant and that network service quality has a significant overall influence on customer loyalty.

The Coefficients table further supports this finding. The unstandardized coefficient ($\beta_{x2} = 0.613$) and p-value of 0.000 indicate that the quality of network service exerts a significant positive effect on customer loyalty. This implies that for every one-unit improvement in network service quality, customer loyalty increases by 0.613 units, assuming other factors remain constant.

The resulting simple linear regression equation can be expressed as:

$$CL=4.430+0.613QNCL = 4.430 + 0.613QNCL=4.430+0.613QN$$

where:

CL = Customer Loyalty

QN = Quality of Network Service

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

Therefore, it is concluded that the quality of network service has a significant and positive influence on customer loyalty to telecommunication network providers in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

The main aim of the study was to determine the relationship between service value and customer loyalty among telecommunication networks in Akwa Ibom State. Price/tariff fairness, perceived service quality, brand perception, and service recovery were adopted as indicators of service value and measured against customer loyalty to MTN Telecommunication services.

Result of the first hypothesis test revealed that there was a significant relationship between fairness of tariff plan and customer loyalty to Telecommunication Network providers in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, with a regression coefficient at $R^2 = 0.628$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.000 \leq 0.05$, which meant that the independent variable = X_1 (fair tariff plan= TP) explained approximately 63% of the variation in customer loyalty to Telecommunication network service providers. This implies that customers of the telecommunication network value the fair tariffs charged for data plans and voice subscriptions offered by the service provider. This finding is in tandem with Fiqqih (2023) who found that price fairness has an effect on customer loyalty and recommended that special attention should be given to determining the right price for products, as it affects customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The results of the second hypothesis indicated that quality network service significantly influenced customer loyalty to the telecommunication network service provider in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, with a regression coefficient of $R^2 = 0.520$ and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than or equal to 0.05. This suggests that the independent variable, Quality Network Service (X2), accounted for 52% of the variation in customer loyalty to telecommunication networks. This implies that customers value good service quality, which includes high-quality voice calls, minimal call drops, and reliable network reception from the telecommunication provider.

This finding is supported by Torrão and Teixeira (2023), who discovered in their study that the quality of service significantly influenced customer satisfaction. Additionally, Egena (2019) asserts in their study that there is a positive relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. The researcher recommended that to prevent subscribers from switching, telecom service providers should ensure that their service qualities are high to guarantee high level of customer satisfaction.

Conclusion

From the study, it is revealed that a fair tariff plan and quality network service were significant predictors of customer loyalty to telecommunication providers. It can be concluded that subscribers placed priority on telecommunication networks that offered them affordable tariff plans for voice and data subscriptions. The empirical results of the study underscore that continuous improvement in telecommunication services in a bid to add better value is capable of attracting customer loyalty and discouraging brand switching. The positive sign of the estimates shows that a unit change in the variables will lead to an increase in customer loyalty to the telecommunication network service provider.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and conclusions reached, the following are recommended:

- i. Telecommunication service providers should ensure that the prices charged on their tariff plans are fair with transparent pricing by implementing tiered data packages with varying validity periods, defined usage caps, and a focus on value-added services.
- ii. It is also recommended that the telecommunication service provider prioritise strong network coverage, consistent call quality, and fast data speeds; actively monitor customer feedback; and regularly assess network performance to identify and address potential issues, while also providing clear communication regarding service disruptions and updates to customers during network time out.

Suggestion for Further Research

The findings of the study reveal that the fairness of tariff plans and the quality of network services play a crucial role in influencing customer loyalty towards telecommunication network providers in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Subsequent research should investigate further factors that may enhance customer loyalty, including the responsiveness of customer service, promotional strategies, brand perception, switching costs, and perceived value. Future investigations could conduct a comparative analysis across various states or regions in Nigeria to uncover regional differences in the factors influencing customer loyalty. Longitudinal studies can be utilised to assess how changing price structures and network quality influence customer retention over an extended period. Considering the growing influence of technology, future investigations could explore how digital advancements, such as mobile applications and loyalty programmes, affect customer loyalty behaviour. Additionally, studies that incorporate moderating or mediating variables like customer satisfaction, trust, and perceived value could reveal more about the relationship between service experience and loyalty. Finally, this type of investigation could be extended to additional service industries, such as banking, hospitality, and transportation, to evaluate the existence of similar relationships between elements of service experience and customer loyalty.

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